

Long live the King

By Park Baker
Staff Writer

Blake Ellege is an active Elvis impersonator who has received national recognition for his portrayal as "The King." Blake Ellege is a Sophomore voice major at BC. His professional hobby is just one of the many talents hidden within the BC community. Park Baker, a Clarion staff writer, sat down with "The King," to get to know the man behind the jumpsuit.



Mr. Ellege, how did you come to Brevard College?

I came to Brevard, I was just a local, I graduated from high school in Hendersonville and Brevard was always my first choice. I had lived here all my life and for the 15 or 16 years I was in high school I always heard good things about our music department, so whenever I graduated it was my first choice to come here, I didn't apply anywhere else, but I decided to come here just because it was in the area and for the reputation it had.

So, what exactly is your specialty as an artist?

As an artist at the moment, outside of my classical studies here at the college and singing with the jazz band, outside of school I am an Elvis Tribute Artist, or an ETA for short, and I've been doing that for the past, god, 8 years? For the past four years I have headlined at B.B. King's Blues Club in Memphis, Tenn. for Elvis Week.

That's pretty incredible. How many people attend?

About 3 million come to Memphis for Elvis Week. I'm performing on Beele Street where B.B. King's is, but whenever I'm not headlining, I'm doing shows up and down Beele Street in different bars, Blues City Cafe, Voodoo Alley, and the Pepsi Pavilion. Because the Elvis fans are in and around Memphis and Graceland they stay close to Beele Street for Elvis Week, but over the course of the week after all my shows and performances all week, close to two thirds of everyone come to my shows.

How many pairs of boots do you have for this get up?

Oh god, boots? Like my attire and stuff? I have so many stage clothes, because I'm an Elvis tribute artist I have to cover 30 years of Elvis' highlights in his career. The '50s, the '60s and '70s, so I have to have clothes to match that certain time period, depending on what show I do. So boots and shoes I probably have 50 to 60 pairs.

Wow, I didn't know it was that intricate.

There is a company based out of Pennsylvania that specializes in recreating all of Elvis' costumes that he ever wore. B&K Enterprises, anyone can go there and buy whatever Elvis jumpsuit they want to. They don't even have to be an impersonator. B&K even recreated the jewelry that he wore.

I've always paid attention to the run of the mill Elvis impersonators, you know they might have had the voice but they didn't have the face, or they might have had the face but not the voice. Or they're got the body

Seared Chicken Spinach Wrap with Dill Vinaigrette

from Chef Boy-ar-Dave

Average Cost of Meal: \$10-15

Prep Time: 5 Minutes

Cook Time: 10 Minutes

Serving Size: 4

Ingredients:

Wrap:

4 boneless chicken breasts
1/2 red onion
12 oz. spinach
1 cup pecans
1 cup bacon bits
1 package of tortillas

Vinaigrette:

1/4 cup vinegar
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons honey
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 teaspoon dill weed
salt and pepper

Instructions:

Cook the chicken in a pan over medium heat. Combine all of the vinaigrette ingredients in a food processor on pulse (or in a bowl and stir). Dice the red onion. Cut cooked chicken into cubes. Lay out four tortillas and evenly distribute chicken, spinach, bacon bits, pecans, and red onion. Sprinkle with vinaigrette and wrap.

Have suggestions for Chef Boy-ar-Dave? Send your ideas to Clarion@brevard.edu.

but nothing else. I've always tried to be as pure in my calling as I can. I try to walk the walk. That's all I can do.

Now do you start back as an ETA full time as soon as the semester ends? Do you do any shows during the school year?

Man I stay busy. Whenever I'm not doing the Elvis thing, me and my parents sing southern gospel. On the weekends and stuff I sing the southern gospel with my family and I go singing and doing an Elvis show somewhere on Saturday night, and I sing at a church Sunday morning. Up until two years ago I had a Blue Brothers Tribute band as well. That's why my car was painted like it was.

Did you jut sing in this band or did you play any instruments?

I was Jake Blues, I was one of the brothers and my friend Jesse who is a student at Catawba, he was Ellwood Blues, and we did the Blues Brothers. We stay busy, trying to book some places on the weekend.

That sounds like a lot of fun.

It is. People always complain, you know, people you see on TV are always complaining about how hard it is on the road, but I haven't seen anything wrong with it because if you really love what you're doing you won't get worn out because you love doing it so much. Yes sir.

I didn't know you sang gospel. Were you at the lecture given by Timothy Tyson last week? What did you think of his accompaniment, Mary D. Williams? Do you see yourself singing gospel your whole life?

She changed my life. Because I'm religious, I know that I'll always be singing gospel. I'm religious, I'm not the most "Christian" person, but I am religious and gospel music is the song of our religion, and I'll always